south-western Afghanistan. During the visit, both sides reaffirmed their strong commitment to combat terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.

Intelligence report about Masood Azhar

1056. SHRI AMAR SINGH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Masood Azhar was moved out of his home town Bahavalpur in mid December to a safer place in North West Frontier province, as per intelligence report;

(b) whether it is also a fact that Pakistan Government had categorically denied the presence of Jaish-e-Mohammed Leader Masood Azhar in their country when asked by Government for his deportation;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether this information was shared with U.S. agencies; and

(e) if so, what was their reaction in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) Government has no definitive information about the precise location of Masood Azhar in Pakistan at this moment.

(b) and (c) The Foreign Ministry of Pakistan in a press release on 18th December, 2008 stated that ".....Masood Azhar is wanted by the Law Enforcement authorities of Pakistan and is at large".

(d) and (e) The information was contained in a Press Release by the Government of Pakistan.

Export duty on Basmati rice

1057. SHRIMATI T. RATNA BAI: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether export duty has been abolished on Basmati rice; and

(b) if so, the benefits being accrued by each State?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) Yes, Sir. The export duty on Basmati rice has been fully exempted with effect from 02.02.2009 *vide* Notification No. 10/2009-Customs, dated the 2nd February, 2009.

(b) The State-wise figures in respect of exports of Basmati rice and the benefits accruing to each of the State on account of export duty exemption given to basmati rice are not maintained. As per the definition notified by the Department of Agriculture, Basmati rice is grown in the States of Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Western Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand. The export duty exemption provided to Basmati rice is likely to benefit these States.